# REVIEW

*Indicator Plants of Coastal British Columbia.* By K. KLINKA, V. J. KRAJINA, A. CESKA, and A. M. SCAGEL. 1989. University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, British Columbia. ix + 288 pages, diagrams, 183 p.p. of color photographs, references, tables, species index. ISBN 0-7748-0321-5.

This beautiful book is written for foresters, by foresters. It is also an excellent field manual for botanists in general and plant ecologists in particular. A short, succinct introductory chapter on "Concepts and methods related to indicator plants" leads into the next chapter on "Site attributes and indicator species". Plant indicators of the different climates found in coastal British Columbia, of soil moisture levels, available soil N, and soil surface materials (mull, mor, mineral, coarse rock, and surface water) are listed. That is, for the forest ecosystems of coastal British Columbia the authors set up the equation Vegetation = f(Environment), where "Vegetation" is qualitatively defined by individual species composition and the Environment is defined by a combination of climate and soil factors.

Unfortunately even the most elaborate experimental and statistical manipulations plant ecologists have so far conceived worldwide are limited to a tiny segment of this general equation—on both sides of the equal sign. But this is hardly news to plant ecologists.

The good news is that we now have an ecological guide based on a very broad and very deep field acquaintance with a most interesting forested area of North America. The guide needs testing, broadening, deepening, imitation.

A short, ecological site description for each of the 729 color-illustrated species of vascular plants, lichens, liverworts, and mosses accompanies each photograph. The description is succinct, accurate, and amazingly complete. The selected species cover a very wide range of habitats—from *Lysichitum americanum* on the wet side to *Agropyron spicatum* on the dry, from *Stellaria crispa* at low altitudes to *Leutkea pectinata* at high, from *Disporum hookeri* in shady sites to *Sedum spathulifolium* in sun-exposed sites, etc.

The book is useful, beautiful, innovative, the distillation of a very large mass of field experience.—JACK MAJOR, Botany Department, University of California, Davis, 95816.